

Preferred Name Policy

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities in accessing these policies are available upon request by emailing accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu

Purpose and Scope

West Chester University recognizes that members of its community use and identify with first names that are different from their legal first names. A chosen or preferred name may be a valuable component of a person's identity and impact their ability to successfully navigate the campus environment. Therefore, the University has established this policy that allows preferred first names to appear in select University systems and records, even if individuals have not changed their legal names. This policy applies to all students and employees at all campuses.

Definitions

Legal Name – The legal name is the first name or middle name that identifies a person for legal, administrative, and other official purposes. A person's legal name generally is the name that was given to the person for the purpose of registration and birth and which appears on a birth certificate but may change subsequently.

Legal/Given Last Name (surname) – Legal last name used, which cannot be changed or altered within the University's information systems unless it has been changed through a legal process outside of the University.

Preferred Name – A name designated in the University systems and communications as the preferred alternative to the individual's legal first name. Only first names may be changed to a preferred name.

Policy Statement

A student or employee's preferred first name may be used in place of the person's legal name in select University systems and records as follows:

- University identification cards
- Official email display names
- Phone directory
- Class and grade rosters
- Diplomas
- Commencement
- Select student activities records
- Student information systems (e.g., RamPortal)
- Learning management systems (e.g., D2L)
- University communications and mailings

- Press releases
- Social media

Legal names will be used for official University records including, but not limited to, the following:

- Legal documents and reports produced by the University
- Student account statements
- Financial aid and scholarship documents
- Transcripts
- Enrollment and degree verifications
- Employment and personnel records
- Paychecks, tax documents, and other payroll documents
- Benefits enrollment

Individuals will be held responsible for any actions under their signature with the use of their Preferred or Legal name.

Policy Framework

Students and employees are permitted to change a preferred first name once per semester. The University will provide a one-time waiver of the fee to update the student or employee identification card with the preferred name. Subsequent changes will result in an applicable fee. University identification cards for students and employees are managed through the Ram Card Office by Student Services, Inc. (SSI).

Students may choose to restrict directory information, including the listing of their legal or preferred name, by completing the [Request for Nondisclosure of Directory Information](#). This is done through the Registrar's Office.

Procedures

Students and employees can change their preferred name in RamPortal. Employees can also change their preferred name in the PASSHE Self-service Portal.

To update the Active Directory, students and employees should visit IS&T's ServiceNow, type "name change" in the search bar, and click on "Name Change Request." This will begin the update for the following:

- Teams
- Google Workspace
- Zoom
- Office 365
- Panopto
- Email
- Ramprint

Preferred name changes may be revoked when the name is deemed inappropriate including, but not limited to, any of the following reasons: avoidance of a legal obligation, fraud, obscene language, or misrepresentation. Reports of such activity will be addressed pursuant to University policies and procedures and applicable law. The following offices may be notified as the circumstances warrant: Human Resources; the Office of Student Conduct; Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance; University Legal Counsel; or any appropriate law enforcement entity. A preferred name change that is revoked may be appealed to the Vice President of the Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement (ACE) (students) or Vice President of Finance and Administration (employees), or their designees, if new information that was not previously available is presented that might change the nature of the request. All appeals must be made in writing, within thirty (30) days of the notification of the revocation.

For questions about this policy, individuals should contact the Vice President for the Division for Access, Compliance, and Engagement or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

Reviewed by: Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance

Policy Owner: Vice President – Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement (ACE)

Approved by:



Dr. Tracey Robinson, Vice President, Division for Access, Compliance and Engagement
March 20, 2025

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History:

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